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Senate

DEVELOPING A BALANCED ENERGY POLICY

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, as it turns out, I am pleased to be speaking immediately after the Senator from Alaska and thank him for the sentiments he shared with all of us. It is not the first time we have heard these sentiments, but it is a message he has delivered consistently.

I have been in this body less than a year, as a new Member of the Senate. I came to the Senate as an old Governor, as did the Presiding Officer. And we, as Governors, tend to be more anxious to get things done. We are not so much interested in rhetoric, not so much interested in symbolism; we want results. We are not interested in process. We want product.

Before I ever got into politics, before I moved to Delaware, I was a naval flight officer. I finished up my tour of duty in 1973. I moved to Delaware to go to the University of Delaware Business School on the GI bill.

One of my first memories being in Delaware, 28 years ago, literally this month, was sitting in line to buy gasoline for my car because we were in the midst of an energy crisis--embargo--at the time and it was tough to buy gasoline.

I thought, 28 years ago, we needed an energy policy for our country. Twenty-eight years later, we still need an energy policy for our country. We did not have one then; and we do not have one now.

We have learned a number of difficult lessons coming out of the tragic

events of September 11, but, for me, one of them is that, more than ever, we need a comprehensive energy policy that will reduce our reliance on foreign oil, that will enable us to provide more energy from within our own country--some of it from corn that is grown in Indiana, some of it from soybeans that are raised in Delaware, some of it from wind, and even some that is harvested from the Sun. We should seek energy from a variety of sources, as well as from the over 500 years of coal beneath the ground of this country, and from nuclear powerplants that provide roughly 20 percent of the electricity in this country.

And in addition to producing new energy sources, we need to conserve energy. There is so much we can do to conserve energy, and not just with moving from internal combustion engines in our cars, trucks, and vans to hybrid-powered vehicles, to eventually, this decade, fuel cells. We can literally go out today and buy, off the shelf, air-conditioners that use half the electricity that most of the air-conditioners in our homes use. The same is true for the furnaces that will warm our homes this winter.

The question before us now is, How do we proceed to an energy bill? How do we take it up? I have been urging my leadership, for months now, to take up an energy bill. My guess is, before I finish, my leader will regret having ever put me on the Energy Committee, but I

want us to debate and report to this body, and to debate in this Chamber, an energy bill. I want to have a chance to do it this month. I want us to have a chance to vote up or down on Senator Murkowski's proposal of opening up the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. I want us to have a chance to vote on a whole host of other issues. But I want us to debate them, and vote on them, and move on. I do not want the debate to be, in what form do we bring the bill to the floor? Do we go through the Energy Committee? Do we then go through the Finance Committee, and then the Environment and Commerce Committees because they have jurisdiction over different parts of the bill.

I want to get the bill to the floor. And as we do, I want to make sure that the Senator from Alaska, the Senator from Delaware, the Senator from Indiana, and others, have every opportunity to amend that bill in ways that are germane to the legislation that is before us. Debate them, vote them up or down, and move on.

As it turns out, there is probably a lot more on this front that we agree on than we disagree on. One of the ways to find

that out for sure is to have the debate.

I pledge to my colleague from Alaska and my colleague from Indiana to do my dead-level best within the Democratic caucus, within the Energy Committee itself, and with my own leadership to make sure we have the opportunity to have fair and open debate on the amendments and a policy that we can then work out with the House and send something to the President to sign.

We may actually have a chance of coming closer to producing a comprehensive energy policy by taking the approach Senator DASCHLE has now suggested. We may actually have a better chance of getting to the debate and the adoption of an energy bill than we would have had if we had gone to regular order. I was not so sure of that 24 hours ago, but having thought it through, I think we may enhance the chances for those of us who want a comprehensive energy policy.

I ask all of my colleagues to work across the aisle, within the committees of jurisdiction, and in the Chamber, and have a good debate this month or next month and be ready to cast the tough votes and to move on.